

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 22, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and, in view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

I. Claim Summary

Claims 12, 14-28, and 30-41 are currently pending in the application, with claims 12, 21, 32, and 41 being independent claims. Claims 12, 16, 21-24, 27-28, 32, 39, and 41 are amended, in accordance with the above amendments. No claims are cancelled or added.

II. Office Action Summary

The following claim rejections were submitted by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action:

- Claims 12, 14, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of U.S. Patent Number 4,829,682 to Gasbarro and U.S. Patent Number 6,571,490 to Tawney, et al.;
- Claims 15-18, 21-24, 26-28, 30-32, and 34-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of Application 75100322, Gasbarro, and Admitted Prior Art;
- Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of U.S. Patent Number 6,457,262 to Swigart, Gasbarro, and Tawney; and
- Claims 25 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of Application 75100322, Gasbarro, Tawney, Admitted Prior Art, and Swigart.

III. Discussion of Admitted Prior Art

Various claims are rejected over combinations that include Admitted Prior Art. The Applicants have reviewed the rejections in the Office Action and prior Office Actions and are unable to determine what admissions the Admitted Prior Art are referring to. Accordingly, the

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner clarify what matter the Admitted Prior Art is referring to.

IV. Discussion of Claims 12 and 14-20

Independent claim 12 recites a method of blow-molding a fluid-filled chamber for an article of footwear. The method includes positioning a parison between a first portion and a corresponding second portion of a mold. The first portion and the second portion of the mold define a cavity with a shape of the chamber. Opposite sides of the parison are shaped to form the chamber within the cavity. The chamber has a first surface, an opposite second surface, and a sidewall extending between the first surface and the second surface. Opposite sides of the parison are bonded together to define a parting line in the sidewall of the chamber. The parting line has at least a first part that is adjacent the first surface, a second part that is adjacent the second surface, and a third part that extends from the first part to the second part.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 12 as being obvious over a combination of Gasbarro and Tawney. In contrast with independent claim 12, neither of Gasbarro or Tawney, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest the concept of a parting line with at least a first part that is adjacent a first surface of the bladder, a second part that is adjacent a second surface of the bladder, and a third part that extends from the first part to the second part, as described in greater detail below.

Gasbarro discloses a sandal sole that includes a fluid-filled bladder. Referring to Figure 6 of Gasbarro, a mold for forming the bladder is depicted as having two portions that join to form a cavity with a shape of the bladder. One portion of the mold forms an upper area of the bladder, and the other portion of the mold forms a lower area of the bladder. In addition, the two portions of the mold interface with each other at a location that is approximately centered between an upper area and a lower area of the bladder. In operation, a parison (see element 34 in Figure 6) extends between the two portions of the mold, and the two portions of the mold close upon the parison to form the bladder within the cavity. When formed through this process, the bladder will have a parting line at a location that corresponds with the interface between the two portions of the mold. That is, the parting line of the bladder will be located at an approximate midpoint between the upper and lower surfaces of the bladder.

Tawney, discloses a plurality of bladders that are suitable for footwear applications. In order to form the bladders disclosed in Tawney, three or more sheets of a polymer material are bonded together at various locations, as indicated by x's in Figures 35, 40, 47, and 51, for example. As recognized in the Office Action, Tawney discloses that a seam may be offset from a center of the bladder to, for example, move the seam away from an area of high stress (Tawney, column 21, lines 7-18).

Based upon the above discussion, Gasbarro discloses a parting line that is positioned at an approximate midpoint between upper and lower surfaces of the bladder, and Tawney discloses that a seam between polymer layers may be offset from the midpoint. Neither reference, however, teaches or suggests a configuration wherein the parting line (or seam) has the configuration recited by independent claim 12. That is, neither reference, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a parting line with at least (1) a first part that is adjacent a first surface, (2) a second part that is adjacent a second surface, and (3) a third part that extends from the first part to the second part.

The Applicants respectfully submit, based upon the above discussion, that independent claim 12 is allowable over the combination of Gasbarro and Tawney. In addition, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 14-20 should be allowable for at least the same reasons as neither of Swigart, Application 75100322, nor Admitted Prior Art remedy the deficiencies discussed above.

V. Discussion of Claims 21-28 and 30-31

Independent claim 21 recites a method of blow-molding a fluid-filled chamber for an article of footwear. The method includes positioning a parison between a first portion and a corresponding second portion of a mold. The parison has a first side that faces the first portion and the parison has a second side that faces the second portion. The parison is shaped to define a first surface, a second surface, and a sidewall of the chamber. The first side of the parison is bonded to the second side of the parison to form a parting line between the first side and the second side of the parison. The parting line is at least partially located within the sidewall, and the parting line has a portion that extends from the first surface to the second surface of the chamber.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 21 as being obvious over a combination of Application 75100322 (hereafter referred to as the 751Ap), Gasbarro, and the Admitted Prior Art. In contrast with independent claim 21, the 751Ap and Gasbarro, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the concept of (a) blow-molding a chamber and (b) forming the chamber with a parting line at least partially located within the sidewall and extending from a first surface to a second surface of the chamber, as described in greater detail below.

The 751Ap discloses various bladder configurations for footwear, but is silent as to the method by which the bladders are manufactured. That is, the 751Ap does not discuss the concept of blow-molding a bladder. Gasbarro discusses a concept similar to blow-molding as a manufacturing method. As discussed with respect to independent claim 12, however, Gasbarro discloses a parting line that is positioned at an approximate midpoint between upper and lower surfaces of the bladder, but has no disclosure of the parting line extending from one surface to another. Accordingly, it would not be obvious to combine the 751Ap and Gasbarro in such a way as to arrive at the particular combination claimed by independent claim 21. That is, one skilled in the art would not be led to pick and choose elements from the 751Ap and Gasbarro to arrive at the claimed invention without some motivation to select those particular elements.

Based upon the above discussion, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 21 is allowable over the combination of the 751Ap, Gasbarro, and the APA. In addition, the Applicants respectfully submit that claim 25 should be allowable as Swigart does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above, and that claims 22-24, 26-28, and 30-31 should be allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 32.

VI. Discussion of Claims 32-40

Independent claim 32 recites a method of blow-molding a fluid-filled chamber for an article of footwear. The method includes providing a mold having a first portion and a corresponding second portion. One of the first portion and the second portion include protrusions, and the other of the first portion and the second portion include indentations that receive the protrusions. The indentations and the protrusions have surfaces that are located separate from surfaces of the mold that form the chamber. A parison is positioned between the first portion and the second portion of the mold. The parison has a first side that faces the first portion, and the parison has a second side that faces the second portion. The parison is bent

around the protrusions and into the indentations as the first portion and the second portion translate toward each other and contact the parison. The parison is shaped to form a first surface from the first side and a second surface from the second side. The first side and the second side are interlaced to form at least a portion of a sidewall of the chamber. In addition, opposite sides of the parison are bonded together.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 32 as being obvious over a combination of the 751Ap, Gasbarro, and the APA. In contrast with independent claim 32, the 751Ap and Gasbarro, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the concept of blow-molding a chamber (a) with a mold that has protrusions and indentations with surfaces that are located separate from surfaces of the mold that form the chamber and (b) with a step that includes bending the parison around and into the protrusions and indentations, as described in greater detail below.

Whereas Gasbarro discusses a concept similar to blow-molding as a manufacturing method, the 751Ap is silent as to methods of manufacture. Neither reference, however, discloses a mold having protrusions and indentations with surfaces that are located separate from surfaces of the mold that form the chamber. The mold in Gasbarro, which is depicted in Figure 6, appears to define a cavity shaped to form a bladder, but is otherwise substantially non-contoured. Even if some element of the mold in Gasbarro is considered to be analogous to the claimed protrusions and indentations, Gasbarro does not disclose the concept of bending the parison around the protrusions and into the indentations.

Based upon the above discussion, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 32 is allowable over the combination of combination of the 751Ap, Gasbarro, and the APA. In addition, the Applicants respectfully submit that claim 33 should be allowable as Swigart does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above, and that claims 34-40 should be allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 32.

VII. Discussion of Claims 41

Independent claim 41 recites a method of blow-molding a fluid-filled chamber for an article of footwear. The method includes positioning a parison between a first portion and a corresponding second portion of a mold. The parison is bent with contours of the mold as the first portion and the second portion translate toward each other, the contours of the mold having

surfaces that are positioned separate from surfaces of a cavity within the mold. The cavity has a shape of the chamber. Opposite sides of the parison are shaped to form the chamber within the cavity. The opposite sides of the parison are also bonded together to define a parting line with a portion that extends from a first side to an opposite second side of the bladder.


The Office Action rejects independent claim 41 as being obvious over a combination of the 751Ap, Gasbarro, and the APA. Similar to independent claim 21, independent claim 41 recites a parting line with a portion that extends from a first side to an opposite second side of the bladder. Similar to independent claim 32, independent claim 41 recites that the parison is bent with contours of the mold, and the contours of the mold have surfaces that are positioned separate from surfaces of a cavity within the mold. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 41 is allowable over the 751Ap, Gasbarro, and the APA.

VIII. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in a condition for allowance. The Applicants respectfully request, therefore, that the rejections be withdrawn and that this application now be allowed.

This Amendment is being timely filed by facsimile transmission on January 20, 2006. Should additional fees or an extension of time be deemed necessary for consideration of this Amendment, such fees or extension are hereby requested and the Commissioner is authorized to charge deposit account number 19-0733 for payment. If anything further is desirable to place the application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned representative at (503) 425-6800.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Byron S. Kuzafa
Registration No. 51,255

Banner & Witcoff, Ltd.
1001 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001-4597
Telephone: (202) 824-3000

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